

CHRIST THE SEEKER AND SAVIOR OF THE LOST

NO. 3309

A SERMON
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*“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”
Luke 19:10*

WE have now considered six of the glorious achievement of our divine Lord and Savior, and it is time to conclude the series. [The other sermons in the series are #1325, Christ the End of the Law,” #1326, Christ the Conqueror of Satan, #1327, Christ the Overcomer of the World, #1323, Christ the Maker of All Things New, #1329, Christ the Destroyer of Death and #273, Christ Triumphant—the Spoiler of Principalities and Powers].

How shall we crown the edifice? The best wine should be kept unto the last, but where shall we find it? The choice is wide, but amid so many wonders which shall we select? What shall be the seventh great work concerning which we shall extol Him? Many marvels suggested themselves to me, and each one was, assuredly, worthy to occupy the place, but as I could not take all, I resolved to close with one of the simplest and most practical. *His saving sinners* seemed to me to be practically the chief of all His works, for it was for this purpose that the rest of His achievements were attempted and performed.

Had it not been for the salvation of men, I know not that we had ever known our Lord as the Destroyer of death or the Overcomer of Satan, and certainly, if He had not saved the lost, I am unable to perceive what glory there would have been in the overcoming of the world, or in the creation of all things new. The salvation of men was the prize of His life’s race, for this He girded up His loins, and distanced every adversary. The salvation of the lost was “the joy which was set before him,” for the sake of which He “endured the cross, despising the shame.”

Although it seems, at first sight, that in selecting our present topic we have descended from the transcendent glories of our Champion to more common things, it is not indeed so. The victories of our Lord which are written in the Book of the wars of the Lord, when He led captivity captive and robbed death of His sting, may strike us as more astounding, but yet in very truth this is the summing-up of His great works, this is the issue, the flower, and crown of all. “The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost,” is a sentence as majestic as prophet ever penned when in fullest inspiration he extolled the Prince of Peace.

I. Notice, first, OUR LORD’S GRACIOUS MISSION, “*The Son of man is come.*”

When He was here among men, He could use the present tense, and say “*is come.*” That was an improvement upon what prophets had to say, for they only spoke of Him as the coming One—as one who, in the fullness of time, would be manifested. The promise was amazing, but what shall I say of the actual performance when the Word made flesh could say, “The Son of man *is come*”? To us, today, the coming of Christ to seek and to save the lost is an accomplished fact, a matter of history, most sure and certain. And what a fact it is!

You have often thought of it, but have you ever worked your mind into the very heart of it—that God has actually visited this world in human form—that He before whom angels bow has actually been here, in fashion like ourselves, feeding the hungry crowds of Palestine, healing their sick, and raising their dead? I know not what may be the peculiar boast of other planets, but this poor star cannot be excelled, for on this world the Creator has stood. This earth has been trodden by the feet of God, and yet it was not crushed beneath the mighty burden, because He deigned to link His Deity with our humanity. The incarnation is a wonder of wonders, but it does not belong to the realm of imagination or even of expectation, for it has actually been beheld by mortal eyes.

We claim your faith for a fact which has really taken place. If we asked you by faith to expect a marvel yet to come, we trust the Spirit of God would enable you so to do, that, like Abraham, you might foresee the blessing and be glad. But the miracle of miracles has been wrought. The Son of the Highest has been here. From Bethlehem to Calvary He has traversed life's pilgrimage. Thirty years or more yonder canopy of sky hung above the head of Deity in human form. O wondrous joy! Say rather, O matchless hive of perfect sweets, for a thousand joys lie close compacted in the word "Immanuel"—God with us!

*"Welcome to our wondering sigh.
Eternity within a span!
Summer in winter! day in night!
Heaven in earth! and God in man!
Great Little One, whose glorious birth
Lifts the earth to heaven, stoops heaven to earth."*

Our Lord had come upon His saved mission as soon as He was really the Son of man, for aforesaid He was known only as the Son of God. Others had borne the name of "son of man," but none deserved it so well as He. Ezekiel, for reasons which we need not now stay to consider, is called "son of man" a very large number of times. Perhaps, like John in Christ's own day, Ezekiel had much of the spirit and character which were manifest in our Lord, and so the name was the more suitable to him. Certainly He had Christ's eagle eye, and Christ's spiritual nature, and was filled with light and knowledge, and so, as if to remind him that he who is like his Lord in excellence must also have fellowship with Him in lowliness, he is again and again reminded that he is still "the son of man."

When our Lord came into this world, He seemed to select that title of "Son of man" for Himself, and make it His own special name, and worthily so, for other men are the sons of this man or that, but His is no restricted humanity, it is manhood of the universal type. Jesus is not born into the race of the Jews so much as into the human family. He is not to be claimed for any age, place, or nationality, He is "the Son of man." And this, I say, is how He comes to man, so that, as long as Christ is the Son of man, we may still say of Him that He comes to seek and to save the lost.

I know that, in person, He has gone back to heaven, I know that the cloud has received Him out of our sight, but the very taking upon Himself of our humanity was a coming down to seek and save the lost, and as He has not laid that humanity aside, He is still with men, continuing to seek and to save, even to this day "he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

So that, if I treat the text as if Jesus were among us still, I shall not err, for He is here in the sense of seeking the same end, though it is by His Spirit and by His servants rather than by His own bodily presence. He has said, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," and that saying is found in connection with the agency which He has established for seeking and saving lost men, by making men disciples and teaching them the way of life. As long as this dispensation lasts, it will still be true that the great Savior and Friend of man has come among us, and is seeking and saving the lost.

II. Now, secondly, let us see HIS MAIN INTENT IN COMING HERE BELOW, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." The intent breaks itself up into two points, the persons—the lost, and the purpose—the seeking and the saving of them.

Christ's main intent in coming here bore upon *the lost*. Proud men do not like us to preach this truth. It was but yesterday that I saw it alleged against Christianity that it discourages virtue and patronizes the guilty. They say that we ministers lift the sinful into the most prominent place, and give them the preference above the moral and excellent in our preaching. This is a soft impeachment to which, in a better sense than is intended by those who bring it, we are glad to plead guilty. We may well be excused if our preaching seeks the lost, for these are the persons whom our Lord has come to seek and to save. The main stress and intent, of the incarnation of God in the person of Christ lies with the guilty, the fallen, the unworthy, the lost. His errand of mercy has nothing to do with those who are good and

righteous in themselves, if such there be, but it has to do with sinners, real sinners, guilty not of nominal but of actual sins, and who have gone so far therein as to be lost.

Wherefore cavil ye at this? Why should He come to seek and to save that which is not lost? Should the Shepherd seek the sheep which has not gone astray? Answer me. Wherefore should He come to be the Physician of those who are not sick? Should He light a candle, and sweep the house to look for pieces of silver which are not lost, but lie bright and untarnished in His hand? To what purpose would this be? Would you have Him paint the lily and gild refined gold? Would you make Him a mere busybody, offering superfluous aid? With those who think themselves pure, what hath the cleansing blood of Jesus to do? Is a Savior a needless person, and was His work a needless business? It must be so if it be intended for those who do not need it.

Who need a Savior most? Answer ye this. Should not mercy exercise itself where there is most need for it? This world is like a battlefield, over which the fierce hurricane of conflict has swept, and the surgeons have come to deal with those who lie upon its pains. To whom shall they go first? Shall they not turn first to those who are most terribly wounded, and who are bleeding almost to the death? Will you quarrel with us if we declare that the first to be taken to the hospital should be those who are in direst need? Will you be angry if we say that the liniment is for the wounded, that the bandages are for the broken limbs, and that the medicine is for the sick? A strange quarrel this would be. If ever it should begin, a fool must begin it, for no wise man would ever raise the question. Blessed Christ of God, we will not cavil because thou also comest in thy mercy to those who need thee most, even to the lost.

And who, think you, will love Him best, and so reward Him best if He comes to them? The proud Pharisee in his perfection of imaginary holiness—will he value the Christ who tells him that He comes to wash away his sin? He turns upon his heel with scorn. What sin has he to wash away? The self-satisfied moralist who dares to say, “All these commands I have kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?”—is he likely to become a disciple of the Great Teacher whose first lessons are, “Ye must be born again,” and “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven”

The fact is, that Jesus has no form nor comeliness to those who have a beauty of their own. Christ gets most love where He pardons most sin, and the sweetest obedience to His command is rendered by those who once were most disobedient, but who are gently led beneath His sway by the force of grateful love. Yon sterile hills of fancied holiness yield Him no harvest, and therefore He leaves them to their own boastfulness, but meanwhile, He scatters plenteous grain amongst the lowlands where the ground is broken and lies ready for the seed. He preaches pardon to those who know that they have sinned, and confess the same, but those who have no sin have no Savior.

But after all, dear friends, if Jesus did direct His mission of salvation to the lost, to whom else could He have come? For, truth to say, there are none but the lost on the face of this whole earth. The proudest Pharisee is but a sinner, and as the more a sinner for his pride, and the moralist who thinks himself so clean is filthy in the sight of God. Though he labors to conceal the spots, the self-righteous man is a leper, and will forever remain so unless Jesus cleanses him. It is a thrice-blessed fact that Christ came to save the lost, for such are we all, and had He not made lost ones the object of His searching and saving, there would have been no hope for us.

What is meant by “*the lost*”? Well, “lost” is a dreadful word. I should need much time to explain it, but if the Spirit of God, like a flash of light, shall enter into your heart, and show you what you are by nature, you will accept that word “lost” as descriptive of your condition, and understand it better than a thousand words of mine could enable you to do.

Lost by the fall, lost by inheriting a depraved nature, lost by your own acts and deeds, lost by a thousand omissions of duty, and last by countless deeds of overt transgressions, lost by habits of sin, lost by tendencies and inclinations which have gathered strength and dragged you downward into deeper and yet deeper darkness and iniquity, lost by inclinations which never turn of themselves to that which is right, but which resolutely refuse divine mercy and infinite love. We are lost willfully and willingly, lost

perversely and utterly, but still lost of our own accord, which is the worst kind of being lost that possibly can be.

We are lost to God, who has lost our heart's love, and lost our confidence, and lost our obedience, lost to the church, which we cannot serve; lost to truth, which we will not see; lost to right, whose cause we do not uphold; lost to heaven, into whose sacred precincts we can never come; lost—so lost that unless almighty mercy shall intervene, we shall be cast into the pit that is bottomless to sink forever.

“LOST! LOST! LOST!” The very word seems to me to be the knell of an impenitent soul. “*Lost! Lost! Lost!*” I hear the dismal tolling! A soul's funeral is being celebrated! Endless death has befallen an immortal being! It comes up as a dreadful wail from far beyond the boundaries of life and hope, forth from those dreary regions of death and darkness where spirits dwell who would not have Christ to reign over them. “*Lost! Lost! Lost!*” Ah me, that ever these ears should hear that doleful sound! Better a whole world on fire than a soul lost! Better every star quenched and yon skies a wreck than a single soul to be lost!

Now, it is for souls that soon will be in that worst of all conditions, and are already preparing for it, that Jesus came here seeking and saving. What joy is this! In proportion as the grief was heavy, the joy is great. If souls can be delivered from going down into such a state, it is a feat worthy of God himself. Glory be to His holy name!

Now note the purpose—He “*came to seek and to save that which was lost.*” Ah, this is a truth worth preaching—this doctrine that Jesus Christ came to seek and to save sinners. Some people tell me that He came “to make men salvable,”—to put all men into such a condition that it is possible that they may be saved. I believe that men *may* be saved, but I see no very great wonder in the fact.

It does not stir my blood or incite me to dance for joy. I do not know that it makes even the slightest impression upon me. I can go to sleep, and I am sure I shall not wake up in the night, and long to get up at once to preach such poor news as that Jesus came to make men salvable. I would not have become a minister to preach so meager a Gospel, but that our Lord came to save men, that is substantial and satisfying news, far exceeding the other. To make men salvable is a skeleton, bones and skin, but to save them is a living blessing. To make men salvable is a farthing blessing, but to save them is wealth untold.

They say also that Jesus came into the world to let men be saved if they will. I am glad of that. It is true and good. I believe that every truly willing soul may be saved, yea, such an one is in a measure saved already. If there be a sincere will towards salvation—understand, towards true salvation—that very will indicates that a great change has commenced within the man, and I rejoice that it is written, “Whosoever will, let him take, the water of life freely.”

But now just read our text as if it ran thus—“The Son of man is come that whoever wills to be saved may be saved.” The sense is good, but very feeble! How is the wine mixed with water! But oh, what flavor, what essence, what marrow, what fatness there is in this, “The Son of man is come *to seek and to save that which was lost*”! This is the Gospel, and the other is but a part of the good news.

Again, read the text another way, “The Son of man is come to help men to save themselves.” This will not do at all. It is something like helping men to march who have no legs, or helping blind men to judge colors, or helping dead men to make themselves alive. Help to those who can do nothing at all is a miserable mockery. No, we cannot have our Bibles altered that way, we will let the text stand as it is, in all its fullness of grace.

Nor is it even possible for us to cut down our text to this, “The Son of man is come to save those who seek him.” If it ran so, I would bless God forever for it, for it would be a glorious Gospel text even then. There are Scriptures which teach that doctrine, and it is a blessed truth for which to be supremely grateful, but my text goes very much further, for it says, “The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

I met with a question and answer the other day, “Where did the Samaritan woman find the Savior? She found Him at the well.” I do not cavil at that mode of expression, but mark you, that is not how I should ask the question. I should rather inquire, “Where did the Savior find the woman?” For surely, she

was not seeking Him, I see no indication that she had any such idea in her mind. She was looking after water from the well, and if she had found that, she would have gone home satisfied. No, those are the finders, surely, who are the seekers, and so it must be that Christ found the woman, for He was looking after her.

While I bless my Lord that He will save you if you seek Him, I am more thankful still that there are men and women whom He will seek as well as save, nay, that there never was a soul saved yet but Christ sought it first. He is the Author as well as the Finisher of faith. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending of the work of grace. Let His name be praised for it. The text must stand as it is, and we will adore the length and breadth, the height and depth of the love which has made it true. Successful seeking and complete saving belong to the Son of man, some of us have experienced both. Oh, that all of us might yet do so!

III. Now we pass on, thirdly, to notice A DOUBLE DIFFICULTY.

We see Christ's errand, and we at once perceive that He has come to deal with people who are lost in two senses, and in each sense a miracle of grace is needed for their deliverance. They are so lost that they need *saving*, but they are also so lost that they need *seeking*. Persons may be so lost on land or on sea as to need saving and not seeking, but we were spiritually lost, so as to need both saving and seeking too.

I heard, a little while ago, of a party of friends who went to the lakes of Cumberland and endeavored to climb the Langdale Pikes. One of the many found the labor of the ascent too wearisome, and so resolved that he would go back to the little inn from which they started. Being a wiser man than some, in his own esteem, he did not take the winding path by which they had ascended. He thought he would go straight down, for he could see the house just below, and fancied he should pitch upon it all of a sudden and show the mountaineers that a straight line is the nearest road.

Well, after descending and descending, leaping many a rugged place, he found himself at last on a ledge from which he could go neither up nor down. After many vain attempts, he saw that he was a prisoner. In a state of wild terror, he took off his garments, and tore them into shreds to make a line, and tying the pieces together he let them down, but he found that they reached nowhere at all in the great and apparently unfathomable abyss which yawned below him. So he began to call aloud, but no answer came from the surrounding hills beyond the echo of his own voice. He shouted by the half-hour together, but there was no answer, neither was there anyone within sight.

His horror nearly drove him out of his wits. At last, to his intense joy, he saw a figure move in the plain below, and he began to shout again. Happily, it was a woman, who, hearing his voice, stopped, and as he called again, she came nearer, and called out, "Keep where you are. Do not stir an inch. Keep where you are." He was lost, but he no longer needed seeking, for some friendly shepherds soon saw where he was. All he wanted was saving, and so the mountaineers descended with a rope, as they were wont to do when rescuing lost sheep, and soon brought him out of danger. He was lost, but he did not want seeking, they could see where he was.

A month or two ago, you must have noticed in the papers an advertisement for a gentleman who had left Wastwater some days before to go over the hills and had not been heard of since. His friends had to *seek* him that, if still alive, he might be saved, and there were those who traversed hill and moor to discover him, but they were unable to save him, because they could not find him.

If they could have found out where he was, I do not doubt that, had he been in the most imminent peril, the bold hill-men would have risked their lives to rescue him, but alas, he was never found or saved, his lifeless corpse was the only discovery which was ultimately made. This last is the true image of our deplorable condition, we are by nature lost, so that nothing but seeking and saving together will be of a service to us.

Let us see how our Lord accomplished *the saving*. That has been done, completely done. My dear friends, you and I were lost in the sense of having broken the law of God, and having incurred His anger, but Jesus came, and took the sin of men upon Himself, and as their Surety and their Substitute He

bore the wrath of God, so that God can henceforth be just, and yet the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.

I would like to die talking of this blessed doctrine of substitution, and I intend, by divine grace, to live proclaiming it, for it is the keystone of the Gospel. Jesus Christ did literally take upon Himself the transgression and iniquity of His people, and was made a curse for them, seeing that they had fallen under the wrath of God, and now every soul that believeth in Jesus is saved because Jesus has taken away the penalty and the curse due to sin. In this let us rejoice.

Christ has also saved us from the power of Satan. The Seed of the woman has bruised the serpent's head, so that Satan's power is broken. Jesus has, by His almighty power, set us free from hell's horrible yoke by vanquishing the prince of darkness, and has, moreover, saved us from the power of death, so that to believers it shall not be death to die. Christ has saved us from sin and all its consequence by His most precious death and resurrection.

*“See God descending in the human frame,
The Offended suffering in the offender's name:
All thy misdeeds to Him imputed see,
And all His righteousness devolved on thee.”*

Our Lord's saving work is in this sense finished, but there is always going on in the world His *seeking* work, and I want you to think of it.

He can save us, blessed be His name. He has nothing more to do in order to save any soul that trusts Him. But we have wandered very far away and are hidden in the wilds of the far country. We are very hungry, and though there is bread enough and to spare, what is the use of it while we are lost to the home in which it is so freely distributed! We are very ragged, there is the best robe, and it is ready to be put on us, but what is the good of it while we are so far away? There are the music and the dancing to make us glad and to cheer us, but what is the use of them while we still tarry among the swine? Here, then, is the great difficulty. Our Lord must find us out, follow our wanderings, and treating us like lost sheep, He must bear us back upon His shoulders rejoicing.

Many need seeking because they are lost in bad company. Evil companions gather around men, and keep them away from hearing the Gospel by which men are saved. There is no place to be lost in like a great city. When a man wants to escape the police, he does not run to a little village, he hides away in a thickly populated town.

So this London has many hiding places where sinners get out of the Gospel's way. They lose themselves in the great crowd and are held captives by the slavish customs of the evil society into which they are absorbed. If they do but relent for a moment, some worldling plucks them by the sleeve and says, “Let us be merry while we may. Why are you so melancholy?”

Satan carefully sets a watch upon his younger servants to prevent their escaping from his hands. These pickets labor earnestly to prevent the man from hearing the good news of salvation lest he should be converted. Sinners therefore need seeking out from among the society in which they are imbedded, they need as much seeking after as the pearls of the Arabian Gulf.

The Lord Jesus Christ, in seeking men, has to deal with deep seated prejudices. Many refuse to hear the Gospel, they would travel many miles to escape its warning message. Some are too wise, or too rich to have the Gospel preached to them. Pity the poor rich! The poor man has many missionaries and evangelists seeking him out, but who goes after the great ones? Some come from the East to worship, but who comes from the West? Many more will find their way to heaven out of the back slums than ever will come out of the great mansions and palaces. Jesus must seek His elect among the rich under great disadvantages, but blessed be His name He does seek them.

See how vices and depraved habits hold the mass of the poorer classes. What a seeking out is needed among working men, for many of them are besotted with drunkenness! Look at the large part of London

on the Lord's day, what have the working population been doing? They have been reading the Sunday newspaper, and loafing about the house in their shirt sleeves, and waiting at the posts of the doors—not of wisdom, but of the drink shop. They have been thirsting, but not after righteousness. Bacchus still remaineth the god of this city, and multitudes are lost among the beer barrels and the spirit casks. In such pursuits, men waste the blessed Sabbath hours. How shall they be sought out? Yet the Lord Jesus is doing it by His Holy Spirit.

Alas, through their ill ways men's ears are stopped, and their eyes are blinded, and their hearts hardened, so that the messengers of mercy have need of great patience. It would be easy work to save men if they could but be made willing to receive the Gospel, but they will not even hear it. When you do get them for a Sabbath day beneath the sound of a faithful ministry, how they struggle against it! They want seeking out fifty times over.

You bring them right up to the light, and flash it upon their eyes, but they willfully and deliberately close their eyelids to it. You set before them life and death and plead with them even unto tears that they would lay hold on eternal life, but they chose their own delusions. So long and so patiently must they be sought that this seeking work as much reveals the gracious heart of Jesus as did the saving work which He fulfilled upon the bloody tree.

Notice how He is daily accomplishing His search of love. Every day, beloved, Jesus Christ is seeking men's *ears*. Would you believe it? He has to go about with wondrous wisdom even to get a hearing. They do not want to know the love message of their God. "God so loved the world,"—they know all about that, and do not want to hear any more. There is an infinite sacrifice for sin, they turn on their heel at such stale news. They would rather read an article in an infidel Review or a paragraph in the *Police News*. They want to know no more of spiritual matters.

The Lord Jesus, in order to get at their ears, cries aloud by many earnest voices. Thank God, He has ministers yet alive who mean to be heard and will not be put off with denials. Even the din of this noisy world cannot drown their testimony. Cry aloud, my brother, cry aloud and spare not, for cry as you may, you will not cry too loudly, for man will not hear if he can help it. Our Lord, to win men's ears, must use a variety of voices, musical or rough, as His wisdom judges best. Sometimes He gains an audience by an odd voice whose quaintness wins attention. He will reach men when He means to save them.

That was an odd voice, surely the oddest I ever heard of, which came a little time ago in an Italian town to one of God's elect ones there. He was so depraved that he, actually fell to worshipping the devil rather than God. It chanced one day that a rumor went through the city that a Protestant was coming there to preach. The priest, alarmed for his religion, told the people from the altar that Protestants worshipped the devil, and he charged them not to go near the meeting room.

The news, as you may judge, excited no horror in the devil worshipper's mind. "Ay," thought he, "then I shall meet with brethren," and so he went to, hear our beloved missionary who is now laboring in Rome. Nothing else would have drawn the poor wretch to hear the good word, but this lie of the priest's was overruled to that end. He went and heard, not of the devil, but of the devil's Conqueror, and before long was found at Jesu's feet, a sinner saved.

I have known my Lord, when His ministers have failed, take out an arrow from His quiver, and fix upon it a message, and put it to His bow, and shoot it right into a man's bosom till it wounded him, and as it wounded him, and he lay moaning upon his bed, the message has been conned, and felt, and accepted. I mean, that many a man in sickness has been brought to hear the message of salvation. Often, losses and crosses have brought men to Jesus' feet. Jesus seeks them so. When Absalom could not get an interview with Joab, he said, "Go and set his barley field on fire." Then Joab came down to Absalom, and said, "Wherefore have thy servants set my field on fire?" The Lord sometimes sends losses of property to men who will not otherwise hear Him, and at last their ears are gained. Whom He seeketh He in due time findeth.

Well, after my Lord has sought men's ears, He next seeks their *desires*. He will have them long for a Savior, and this is not an easy thing to accomplish, but He has a way of showing men their sins, and then

they wish for mercy. He shows them at other times the great joy of the Christian life, and then they wish to enter into the like delight. I pray that, at this hour, He may lead some of you to consider the danger you are in while you are yet unconverted, that so you may begin to desire Christ, and in this way may be sought and found by Him.

Then He seeks their *faith*. He seeks that they may come and trust Him, and He has ways of bringing them to this, for He shows them the suitability of His salvation, and the fullness and the freeness of it, and when He has exhibited Himself as the sinners' Savior, and such a Savior as they want, then do they come and put their trust in him. Then has He found them and saved them.

He seeks their *hearts*, for it is their hearts that He has lost. And oh, how sweetly does Christ, by the Holy Spirit, win men's affections, and hold them fast! I shall never forget how He won mine, how first He gained my ear, and then my desires, so that I wished to have Him for my Lord, and then He taught me to trust Him, and when I had trusted Him, and found that I was saved, then I loved Him, and I love Him still.

So, dear hearer, if Jesus Christ shall find you, you will become His loving follower forever. I have been praying that He would bring this message under the notice of those whom He means to bless. I have asked Him to let me sow good soil. I hope that, among those who read these pages, there will be many whom the Lord Jesus has specially redeemed with His most precious blood, and I trust that He will appear at once to them, and say to each one of them, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee."

May the eternal Spirit open your ears to hear the still small voice of love! By grace omnipotent may you be made to yield to the Lord with the cheerful consent of your conquered wills, and accept that glorious grace which will bring you to praise the seeking and saving Savior in heaven! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

JEREMIAH 31:29-37

(Concluded from Sermon #3308)

Verses 29-30. *In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge.*

God was going to deal with the Israelites individually, personally, and that is how He will deal with us.

31. *Behold,—*

Here is something worth beholding, read this great promise with tears in your eyes:—

31-33. *The days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people* [See sermon #1687, The Law Written on the Heart and #2992, God's Writing upon Man's Heart].

It is all wills and shalls, it is all covenant life—no longer the law graven upon the tables of stone, but the law written on the heart—no more the Lord's command without man's power and will to obey it, but God will renew our nature, and change our disposition, so that we shall love to do what once we loathed, and shall loathe the sins that we once loved. What a wonderful mass of mercies is included in the covenant of grace!

34. *And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me,—*

“All thy children shall be taught of the LORD.” All believers, whatever else they may not know, do know their Lord, “they shall all know me,”—

34. *From the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD:*

How will they learn to know the Lord? Well, it will be in a very wonderful way;—

34. *For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more* [See sermon #2006, Knowing the Lord through Pardoned Sin].

Let me read that again, and may some poor wandering children of God hear the promise, and be glad that it applies to them, “I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

35-37. *Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name: if those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundation of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD.*

[Other sermons by Mr. Spurgeon upon the same text are #204, The Mission of the Son of Man, #1100, Good News for the Lost, #2756, Saving the Lost and #3050, The Errand of Mercy].

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